



## Planning and teamwork result in rapid resolution to an important water project

Three City of Norfolk service departments, the Virginia department of Transportation (VDOT) and state-controlled Miss Utilities recently worked together on a project that exemplifies outstanding interagency cooperation and customer service.

The customer was Norfolk Academy; the project was the installation of a new, larger water tap to accommodate the school's expanded facility; the main issue was the coordination and scheduling of the departments so that the work could be completed and the boulevard restored to normal before the beginning of the school term.

Completion of the project required the Department of Utilities to tap into an existing 20" water main, located in the east lane of Northampton Boulevard at the end of the exit ramp off I-64 West. To do this, coordination with VDOT was essential.

Because the Northampton Boule-

vard ramp is a high-speed, high-volume area and the project extended beyond three days, the traffic control plan required detailed forethought to safety. In compliance with Virginia Work Area Protection Manual, VDOT created a traffic control plan, the implementation of which was divided between VDOT and Utilities. This included warnings of traffic pattern changes on the I-64 variable message boards, post-mounted advance-warning signs, an extended transition area utilizing traffic barrels, installation of equipment in the buffer



*The project site included the east lane of Northampton Boulevard and extended across a ravine to Norfolk Academy property where the meter was located .*

area and Jersey barriers around the work zone for protection of the workers. In addition, Utilities employees conducted daytime and nighttime drive-through inspections of the area



*Setting up the traffic pattern not only protected Utilities and Public Works employees and contractors, but also allowed Parks and Forestry to safely perform maintenance on the ravine.*



*Utilities crews excavated, tapped the main and were out of Northampton Boulevard in one day. The excavation remained open and unpaved until completion of the job.*



*The water tap extended from the main in the Northampton Boulevard lane to a meter about 40 feet away on Norfolk Academy property, securing adequate service for the school.*

to ensure its integrity for the duration of the project.

The depth of the excavation required that the spoil, or the excavated material, be removed and placed a measurable safe distance away from the site. This, too, was for the safety of the workers, and required additional planning time.

In order to place the signs and for the excavation itself, Miss Utilities had to be notified in time to mark the work area's existing utilities, which included two telecommunication systems, fiber optic cables for traffic signals, water and electrical power.

The Norfolk Public Works Department was also essential in the planning process, since that department is responsible for paving and restoring roadways after utilities repairs are made. It was important that Public Works begin the road repair immediately after the tap was made, to avoid inconveniencing travelers for a longer period of time.

Months in planning, the project was originally scheduled for August 15-19. It was to be a "one-week wonder", specifically designed to give Norfolk Academy the service it needed in time for the opening of school and to minimize any inconvenience to traffic on a main thoroughfare.

As luck would have it, Hurricane Irene was lingering off the coast of Florida, forcing Utilities to postpone the project for safety's sake. The rescheduled date was August 22-28, and Norfolk Academy was set to begin its fall term the fol-

lowing Tuesday. This made the scheduling and execution of the project even more critical.

The extensive planning paid off.

Even though the project was postponed, and despite the fact that it rained the entire first day of excavation, Utilities dug up the main and made the tap in one day. During the next two days, crews extended the tap to the meter, which

was on Norfolk Academy property, about 40 feet away from the highway. By Friday, Public Works paved the disrupted area of Northampton Boulevard, and by Saturday morning the normal traffic pattern was restored.

"All in all this was a very successful project," said Utilities Operations Manager Eric Tucker. "The City saved time and money, reduced the inconvenience to commuters using I-64 to travel to Virginia Beach and the Eastern Shore, and supplied Norfolk Academy with the service it needs for current and future needs."



*Proper planning ensured that Public Works employees and contractors could begin paving the same day the Utilities work was finished.*

For more than a year Norfolk Utilities and Public Works have been closely coordinating their repair efforts and reducing the inconvenience that can be caused by the disruption of traffic. The two departments work so closely on projects that the paving contractor is on site and developing a plan before Utilities is finished with the job. That way, the pavement can be done immediately after the job is completed. There is no need for a temporary patch to be followed later by permanent paving, and there is no need for traffic to be disrupted a second time.



## FALL IS THE TIME TO...

Prepare your home for the onslaught of winter weather!

Avoid broken water pipes and property damage by taking these actions:

- **Insulate all your pipes**, and replace wet insulation;
- **Eliminate drafts** by plugging cracks, fixing broken windows, covering or closing open air vents;
- **Disconnect and drain** all garden hoses.